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ABSTRACT

The Nevada Department of Education implemented a standard setting study of the Pre-Professional Skills Tests. The tests constitute a secure test battery developed by the Educational Testing Service to assess basic proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics via three multiple-choice tests and a written essay test. The Nevada study, in the spring of 1985, involved review of the tests by a validating panel nominated by administrators of public school districts, private schools, and institutions of higher education. Panelists were asked to judge each test item in relation to its ability to measure job-related skills, the opportunity of the typical candidate to learn the skill measured, and the predicted number of marginally qualified candidates able to correctly answer the item. The Angoff method was used to determine passing scores. Study results indicate that the overall averages for reading, mathematics, and writing test items considered as capable of testing essential skills were 64.1, 51.4 and 41.4 percent, respectively. Responses concerning the relevance of essay skills were related to the minority versus non-minority status of the panelists. Overall, the results support the validity of the tests for use in Nevada. State universities have included the tests and associated cut-scores in their admissions criteria. Study survey instruments are appended. (TJH)

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VALIDATION OF THE PRE-PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TESTS IN NEVADA

Introduction

Background

The issue of teacher competency has been on the agenda of the Nevada Commission on Professional Standards since 1981. In 1982 four components of a teacher competency program were considered: 1) basic literacy; 2) subject matter competency; 3) pedagogy; and 4) an internship or initial year teaching program. The Superintendent of Public Instruction suggested that the Commission take a position and make a recommendation to the State Board of Education. During the next few years a teacher competency assessment framework was conceptually adopted by the State Board and the Commission continued to refine the proposal. Public hearings were held, Commission members met with representatives of the Educational Testing Service and a sub-committee held regular work sessions. In October 1984, the Commission presented its completed teacher competency assessment package to the State Board of Education. The Board accepted both the basic skills and subject matter testing components. After a Department review of available basic skills tests,the Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST) were recommended to and accepted by the State Board. The Board also directed that a validation study of the PPST be conducted. This study, consisting of content validation for use of the PPST in Nevada and a determination of appropriate cut-scores, was carried out by the State Department of Education in the spring of 1985. However, previous to this, in October 1984, the Colleges of Education in the University of Nevada System began to require that their students take the PPST prior to admission to advanced standing. No passing scores were established, but records of all test results were maintained and analyzed.

The purpose of this report is to describe and report the results of the validation study of the PPST conducted by the Nevada Department of Education in March 1985.

Description of the PPST

The Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST) are a secure test battery developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to assess basic proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics. Basic proficiency is defined as the minimum achievement level appropriate for graduates of secondary schools who may have had up to two years of post-secondary education.

The reading test consists of 40 multiple choice questions, and requires 40 minutes. Reading skills tested include literal comprehension, the ability to understand how material is organized and how it conveys the message, and the ability to make reasoned qualitative judgments about the nature and merits of a written message.

The mathematics test consists of 40 multiple choice questions and requires 50 minutes. This test of mathematical concepts and skills includes knowledge expected to be covered by the mathematics curricula from the elementary grades through high school.

The writing test has two components: a 45 item multiple choice test requiring 30 minutes and a written essay requiring 30 minutes. The writing test covers the ability to use grammar and language appropriately and to communicate in writing with a specific aim or purpose in mind.

The detailed objectives/specification of each test are provided in Appendix A.

The PPST are used for a variety of purposes. Individual institutions, state departments of education and school districts may use these scores for admission to teacher training programs, for initial certification or for job selection. The PPST are most often used as a screening mechanism for entry into teacher training programs in institutions of higher education. This is the purpose for which they will be used in Nevada. The PPST are designed to separate candidates who are minimally qualified in terms of basic skills from those who are not. They are not meant to be used to rank or differentiate among the qualified candidates in the field.

According to the NTE (National Teacher Examination) Policy Council which is independent of the Educational Testing Service but sets policy for their tests, each PPST user is required to document the appropriateness of the test for its particular population and purpose and to specify the performance standards (cut scores) that are judged to be indicative of minimum competency. This is accomplished through a process of test validation and standard setting. It is recommended that the content validation study and the process of determining minimal competency standards be carried out by a panel of persons representative of the entire educational community. The panel should include representatives from the public schools, the private schools and from higher education. Moreover, those with different types of involvement in education should be represented: elementary teachers, secondary teachers, administrators, professors, etc. The panel should also reflect the ethnic and demographic characteristics of the area to be served. For example, in Nevada, persons representing north and south, the urban and the rural areas and persons with different ethnic backgrounds should all be included.

Procedures

Administrators of public school districts, private schools and the institutions of higher education were contacted for the purpose of nominating knowledgeable, experienced persons to serve on the validation panel. It was requested that those in different positions and with different backgrounds be adequately represented. From these nominations 63 persons were selected and agreed to serve. Table 1. provides information on panel characteristics in terms of gender, ethnic background and type of involvement in education.

In order to facilitate travel, two all day work sessions were held, one on March 5th in Reno and one on March 8 in Las Vegas. Panel members attended the one closest to their area of residence. All panel members were provided with specifications for all the tests before the meetings. However, as it was intended that each panelist evaluate only one of the basic skills tests during the work session, each was asked to indicate his/her choice previous to the session. At the work sessions a set of 15 persons evaluated each of the multiple choice tests (reading, mathematics, and writing); 18 persons evaluated the writing essay test.

In evaluating the tests, panelists were asked to judge each test item in relation to three basic questions:

1) How job-related/necessary to performing the job of teaching are the abilities/skills being tested? The choices for responses were "Essential", "Important", "Helpful" or "Irrelevant".

2) Has the typical candidate had a reasonable opportunity to learn the skills/acquire the abilities needed to answer the question? The response options were "Yes", "No" or "Do not know".

3) Out of 100 marginally qualifed candidates, how many would be able to answer the question correctly?

The Angoff method* was used to arrive at passing scores (#3 above). This method is based upon the idea that the passing score should be the score that would be expected from a person whose knowledge and skills are on the borderline between two subgroups, the higher scoring and the lower scoring test- takers. Materials were provided before the meeting which described and defined a marginal certification candidate. Panelists also participated in a practice and discussion session before being asked to apply this method.

*See Livingston, Samuel A. and Michael J. Zieky, Passing Scores, Educational Testing Service 1982, pp. 24-26

TABLE 1.

Characteristics of Panel Members
Nevada Validation Study of the PPST
(Total N=63)

Characteristics	Number of Judges for:				
	Reading	Math	Writing	Essay	Totals
Gender					
Female	8	7	10	13	38
Male	7	8	5	4	25
Ethnic Group					
Amer. Ind.	0	0	0	0	0
Black	2	1	1	2	6
Caucasian	12	13	13	16	54
Hispanic	1	1	0	0	2
Other	0	0	1	0	1
Type of Involvement In Education					
Elem. Sch. (Tot.)	6	4	3	7	20
Elem. Teacher	(4)	(4)	(2)	(5)	(15)
Elem. Principal	(2)	(0)	(1)	(1)	(4)
Other	(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(1)
Secondary Sch. (Tot.)	4	5	7	8	24
Sec. Teacher	(3)	(5)	(6)	(4)	(18)
Sec. Principal	(1)	(0)	(1)	(3)	(5)
Other	(0)	(0)	(0)	(1)	(1)
Teacher Educator	1	4	2	1	8
Parent	3	1	1	0	5
Administrator	1	1	1	1	4
Other (School Trustee, Consultant)	0	0	1	1	2
TOTALS	15	15	15	18	63

Results of the Study

The Reading Test

The panel judgments on the Reading Multiple Choice test are presented in TABLE 2.

The relevancy columns are cumulative. The first column gives the percent of panelists who judged knowledge of the content of each item to be "essential" to performing teaching activities. The second column gives the percent of panelists who judged the content of each item to be either "essential or important" to performing teaching activities. The third column gives the percent of panelists who judged the content of each item to be "essential, important or at least helpful" to performing the job of teaching.

In the last column the percent of panelists who responded "Yes" to "Would the typical candidate have had a reasonable opportunity to learn the skills or acquire the knowledge needed to answer the question correctly" is presented.

Some of the findings are:

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the reading test items as "essential" range from only 13% for item 10 to 93% for items 1, 4 and 17.

  The overall average percent "essential" rating is 64.1.

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the reading test items as "essential or important" range from 73% for item 10 to 100% (for eight items).

  The overall average percent "essential or important" rating is 90.3.

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the reading test items as "essential, important or helpful" range from 87% (for five items) to 100% (for twenty-two items).

  The overall average percent "essential, important or helpful" rating is 96.1.

- The great majority of panelists (73% or more for each item) judged that the typical candidate would have had a reasonable opportunity to learn the knowledge/skills needed to answer the questions.

  The overall average percent "Yes" judgments is 94.3.

TABLE 2

Judgments of Panel Members with Respect to Relevancy and Opportunity to Learn for Each Item on the Reading Multiple Choice Test

Item Number	Relevancy to Performing Teaching Activities: % Essential	% Essential or Important	% Essential Important or Helpful	Opportunity to Learn: % Yes
1	93	100	100	100
2	80	100	100	100
3	80	100	100	100
4	93	93	93	100
5	80	100	100	93
6	73	80	87	100
7	53	87	87	100
8	53	73	87	100
9	40	67	93	93
10	13	73	93	73
11	67	87	93	93
12	53	93	100	100
13	73	93	100	93
14	80	100	100	93
15	67	100	100	87
16	80	93	93	93
17	93	100	100	100
18	87	93	93	100
19	47	80	87	67
20	73	93	93	87
21	60	87	93	93
22	47	87	93	93
23	27	80	87	93
24	60	93	100	100
25	73	93	93	93
26	53	87	93	93
27	87	100	100	100
28	27	93	93	93
29	53	87	100	87
30	73	100	100	100
31	60	93	100	93
32	40	80	100	87
33	73	93	100	100
34	60	93	100	100
35	47	80	93	93
36	67	93	100	100
37	67	100	100	93
38	67	87	100	100
39	73	87	100	87
40	73	93	100	100
Average	64.1	90.3	96.1	94.3

The Mathematics Test

TABLE 3 displays the panel judgments on the Mathematics Multiple Choice test.

The three relevancy columns are again cumulative. The last column presents the percent of panelists who responded "Yes" to "Would the typical candidate have had a reasonable opportunity to learn the skills or acquire the knowledge needed to answer the question correctly".

Some of the findings are:

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the mathematics test items as "essential" for performing the job of teaching range from 0% for item 37 to 93% for item 5.

  The overall average percent "essential" rating is 51.4.

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the mathematics test items as "essential or important" ranges from 27% for item 36 to 100% for items 1 and 2.

  The overall average percent "essential or important" rating is 81.8.

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the mathematics test items as "essential, important or helpful" for teaching ranges from 87% (for five items) to 100% (for twenty items).

  The overall average percent "essential, important or helpful" rating is 95.8.

- The majority of panelists (80% or more for each item) judged that the typical candidate would have had a reasonable opportunity to learn the knowledge/skills needed to answer the questions.

  The overall average percent "Yes" judgments is 97.3.

TABLE 3

Judgments of Panel Members with Respect to Relevancy and Opportunity to Learn for Each Item on the Mathematics Multiple Choice Test

Item Number	Relevancy To Performing Teaching Activities: % Essential	% Essential or Important	% Essential Important or Helpful	Opportunity to Learn: % Yes
1	87	100	100	100
1	87	100	100	100
3	73	93	100	100
4	73	93	100	100
5	93	93	100	100
6	53	73	93	100
7	53	80	87	100
8	40	67	87	93
9	47	67	100	93
10	80	93	93	100
11	80	93	100	100
12	40	67	93	93
13	67	87	100	100
14	67	93	93	100
15	67	80	100	100
16	67	93	100	100
17	60	80	93	100
18	33	80	87	100
19	87	93	100	100
20	80	80	93	80
21	80	93	100	100
22	53	80	93	100
23	40	87	100	93
24	67	93	100	100
25	40	73	93	100
26	20	80	100	93
27	27	67	93	87
28	13	67	93	100
29	13	73	100	93
30	47	80	93	100
31	40	87	100	100
32	33	80	93	100
33	20	87	100	100
34	27	80	93	100
35	73	87	100	100
36	0	27	87	80
37	33	80	93	100
38	47	93	100	100
39	20	73	93	93
40	27	80	87	93
Average	51.4	81.8	95.8	97.3

The Writing Multiple Choice Test

The panel judgments on the Writing Multiple Choice test are presented in TABLE 4.

Once again the panelists were asked to judge each test item for its relevancy to the performance of teaching. The first three columns dealing with relevancy are cumulative. Panelists also made judgments as to whether a typical candidate would have had an opportunity to learn the writing skill/knowledge involved.

The major findings are:

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the writing test items as "essential" for performing the job of teaching range from 7% for item 37 to 87% for item 28.

  The overall average percent "essential" rating is 41.4.

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the writing test items as "essential or important" for teaching ranges from 47% for item 38 to 100% (for eleven items).

  The overall average percent "essential or important" rating is 83.4.

- The percent of panelists judging the content of the writing test as "essential, important or helpful" ranges from 67% for item 24 to 100% (for thirty-three items).

  The overall average percent "essential, important, or helpful" rating is 97.1.

- The majority of panelists (53% or more for each item) judged that the typical candidate would have had a reasonable opportunity to learn the knowledge/skills needed to answer the questions.

  The overall average percent "Yes" judgments is 93.8.

TABLE 4

Judgments of Panel Members with Respect to Relevancy and Opportunity to Learn for Each Item on the Writing Multiple Choice Test

Item Number	Relevancy To Peforming Teaching Activities: % Essential	% Essential or Important	% Essential Important or Helpful	Opportunity to Learn: % Yes
1	47	87	100	100
2	53	80	100	100
3	67	100	100	100
4	53	100	100	93
5	53	93	100	100
6	60	100	100	100
7	53	100	100	100
8	33	93	100	100
9	53	100	100	100
10	53	73	93	87
11	73	100	100	100
12	27	93	100	93
13	33	87	100	93
14	33	80	100	87
15	20	60	100	100
16	60	100	100	100
17	20	80	93	87
18	40	87	93	100
19	53	93	93	87
20	40	80	100	100
21	33	67	89	60
22	47	100	100	93
23	27	87	100	87
24	13	40	67	53
25	40	67	100	73
26	47	80	100	100
27	33	80	100	100
28	87	100	100	100
29	40	87	83	93
30	27	80	93	100
31	60	100	100	100
32	20	93	100	100
33	67	100	100	100
34	80	93	100	93
35	53	80	100	100
36	40	87	100	100
37	7	60	100	87
38	20	47	87	80
39	13	60	100	100
40	40	80	100	93
41	27	67	93	100
42	40	80	93	100
43	27	53	100	87
44	33	67	93	100
45	20	93	100	93
Average	41.4	83.4	97.1	93.8

Standard Setting for the Multiple Choice Tests

The panels' passing score judgments for each of the multiple choice tests (mathematics, reading, writing) were arrived at by averaging the judgment values of individual panelists. The results are presented in raw score form for each test and for subgroups as well as for all panelists combined in TABLE 5.

Some small differences are observable when the passing score judgments are viewed by subgroup. For example, the mathematics passing score judgment of minority panelists was lower than that for the panel as a whole, but the writing passing score judgment of the minority subgroup was higher than that for all panelists. Also, the teacher educators recommended somewhat lower passing scores for the mathematics test and the writing test than was recommended by the panel as a whole.*

Also presented by subgroup and by total in TABLE 5 are the percents of panelists who believe the typical candidate would have had an opportunity to learn the material covered in the test items. Obviously an overwhelming majority of panelists believed the typical candidate would have had such an opportunity.

*Please note that these differences should only be regarded as tentative due to the small numbers involved in these subgroups.

TABLE 5

PANEL JUDGMENTS ON PASSING SCORES AND OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FOR EACH OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS
(By Subgroups)

	Mathematics		Reading		Writing	
	Passing Score	% Yes Opportunity to Learn	Passing Score	% Yes Opportunity to Learn	Passing Score	% Yes Opportunity to Learn
ETHNIC GROUP						
Minorities	16	99	19	93	22	94
Caucasian	20	96	19	95	18	94
TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION						
Elementary Teachers/ Principals	20	99	18	98	20	93
Secondary Teachers/ Principals	21	97	19	94	19	97
Teacher Educators	17	94	19	100	14	99
Other	21	98	22	89	17	87
ALL PANELISTS	19	97	19	94	18	94

The Writing Essay Test: Relevance

The remaining section of the Pre-Professional Skills tests consists of writing an essay. The multiple choice writing test score is combined with the essay score to arrive at one writing score for each individual test taker.

Judgments of the essay panelists regarding the relevance of essay writing skills to the job of teaching and the typical candidate's opportunity to learn essay writing skills can be found in TABLE 6.

Some of the findings are:

- Overall, 78% of the panelists rated essay writing skills as either "essential" or "important". None of the panelists rated essay writing skills as "irrelevant" to performing teacher activities.

- When viewed by ethnic group status, it is clear that non-minority members were more likely (81%) to judge essay writing skills as either "essential" or "important" than were minority panel members (50%).*

- Viewed by type of involvement in education, teacher educators were most likely (100%) to judge essay writing skills as "essential" or "important" to teaching performance whereas elementary teachers/principals were least likely (71%) to do so.

- The great majority of all panelists (83%) believed a typical candidate would have had a reasonable opportunity to learn essay writing skills.

- Minority panelists were less likely (50%) to believe the typical candidate would have had a reasonable opportunity to learn essay writing skills than was true for non-minority panelists (88%).

- By type of involvement all (100%) secondary teachers or principals and teacher educator panelists believed the typical candidate would have had a reasonable opportunity to learn essay writing skills. Somewhat fewer elementary teachers or principals believed this to be the case (86%) and only 50% of the other panelists agreed.

*As mentioned before, these differences by subgroups should only be regarded as tentative due to the small numbers involved.

TABLE 6

Percent of Panelists Who Indicate that Essay Writing Skills are Relevant to Teacher Performance and Who Believe the Typical Candidate Has Had a Reasonable Opportunity to Learn those Writing Skills
(By Subgroups)

	Relevance of Essay Writing Skills to Teacher Performance		A Reasonable Opportunity to Learn Essay Writing Skills	
Ethnic Group				
Minorities	Essential or Important	50%	Yes	50%
	Helpful	50%		
Caucasian	Essential or Important	81%	Yes	88%
	Helpful	19%		
Type of Involvement in Education				
Elementary Teacher/Principal	Essential or Important	71%	Yes	86%
	Helpful	29%		
Secondary Teacher/Principal	Essential or Important	84%	Yes	100%
	Helpful	17%		
Teacher Educator	Essential or Important	100%	Yes	100%
Other (Special program administrator district consultants)	Essential or Important	75%	Yes	50%
	Helpful	25%		
Total	Essential or Important	78%	Yes	83%
	Helpful	22%		

The Writing Essay Test: Standard Setting

The passing score judgment for the essay question is shown in TABLE 7. The panel passing score, based on an average of the individual panelists' judgments, is 7. There is slight variation by subgroups of panelists. The procedure for arriving at recommendations for passing or cut scores involved a number of steps. Materials were provided and discussions held concerning the meaning of essay scores 1 through 6 (with 6 the highest) and the characteristics of a minimally adequate essay. Panelists were asked to read twelve essays from the ETS files (these essays had been selected by ETS to represent a range of scores 1-6. The actual ETS ratings were unknown to the panelists however). Panelists were first asked to sort the twelve essays into two groups: below minimal and above minimal. Next they were asked to quality rank the essays, 1 through 12, with 1 being the best. Finally each panelist gave each essay a score of 1-6. Panalists then shared and discussed their ratings for each essay. Following this, each panelist made an individual judgment regarding the minimum score (1-12)* she/he would consider acceptable for a teacher candidate.

TABLE 7

Panel Judgments on a Passing Score
for the Essay Question
(By subgroups)

Ethnic Group	Passing Score
Minorities	6
Caucasian	7
Type of Involvement in Education	
Elementary Teachers and Principals	7
Secondary Teachers and Principals	6
Teacher Educators	8
Other (Special Program administrators district consultants)	7
All Panelists	7

*When ETS scores the PPST essays, the first reader's score from 1 to 6 plus the second reader's score from 1 to 6 equals the essay score.

CONCLUSIONS

The Validity of the PPST in Nevada

Content validity was tested by panelists' responses to "How job-related/necessary to performing the job of teaching are the abilities/skills being tested"? TABLES 2,3,4 and 6 provide clear evidence that the expert panelists considered the content of the tests to be relevant to the job of teaching. A substantial majority of all panelists judged the test items to be either essential or important for performing teaching activities (Reading: 90.3%; Mathematics: 81.8%; Writing: 83.4%; Essay: 78%). Almost all judged the test items to be "essential, important or at least helpful" (Reading: 96.1%, Mathematics: 95.8%, Writing: 97%, Essay: 100%).

A related concern was posed by the question "Has the typical candidate had a reasonable opportunity to learn the skills/acquire the abilities needed to answer the questions correctly?" The results show that an overwhelming majority believe the typical candidate has had a reasonable opportunity to learn the content covered by the Reading (94.3%), Mathematics (97.3%), and Writing (93.8%) multiple choice tests. The "% yes" responses is slightly lower (83%) regarding candidates'opportunity to have learned essay writing skills. When panelists' responses are viewed by ethnic background or by type of involvement in education, there are few differences except for the opportunity to learn essay writing skills. For this case, only 50% of the minority panelists and 50% whose involvement in education is outside a specific school or university, believed candidates would have had an opportunity to learn these skills.

Overall the results of this study testify to the validity of the PPST for use in Nevada.

Standard Setting

The process of standard setting or setting passing scores for the different tests has been described previously. Briefly, each panelist was asked to judge each test item in relation to the question, "Out of 100 marginally qualified candidates, how many would be able to answer the question correctly?" Individual panelist responses were combined in order to arrive at a collective judgment on raw passing scores for each test. These are provided in TABLE 8 in the column titled "Raw Score Mean". Before they can be used however, these raw scores or estimated passing scores must be translated into scaled scores. This translation is accomplished by means of NTE Score Conversion Tables provided by ETS. The translation results in only three scores as the Writing Multiple Choice and the Essay test are combined into a single composite score. This is accomplished by adding the Multiple Choice passing score to 3.75 and multiplying by the passing score on the Essay test. The result is a composite score weighted approximately 60% for the Multiple Choice test and approximately 40% for the essay section. The conversion scores for each of the three tests are presented in TABLE 8 under the column titled "Scaled Score Equivalent".

In setting passing scores, it is generally recognized that error of measurement is inherent in any psychological or educational test. Two types of errors can be made. One type is false negative, when someone who should have passed, fails. The other is false positive, when someone who should have failed, passes. To be sure that candidates are not excluded because of an error of measurement when their true performance is just at the lowest acceptable level, it is common practice to set the actual passing scores one or two standard error units below that judged appropriate by the reviewing panel. The standard error of the PPST is approximately 3 points on the scaled score.

TABLE 8

Minimum PPST Scores Recommended
By the Nevada Validation Study Panel Members

	# of Questions	Raw Score Mean	Scaled Score Equivalent	Standard Error of Measurement
Reading	40	19	169	3
Math	40	19	169	3
Writing				
Multiple choice	45	18		
Essay	1	7		
Composite*		44	170	3

*Multiple Choice Raw Score + 3.75 x Essay Raw Score

Recommendations and Implementation

In the fall of 1985, personnel from the Schools of Education at the University of Nevada-Reno and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and from the Nevada Department of Education met several times to discuss implementation of the use of the PPST. Results of the cut-score judgments derived from the validation study were presented by the Department. Results of their trial experiences with the PPST were presented by UNR and UNLV representatives. These data, together with national PPST data obtained from the Educational Testing Service were used to make final determinations of the passing scores to be used in Nevada. These are: Reading: 169, Mathematics: 169 and Writing: 170. It was decided that passing the PPST with the agreed upon cut-scores would become a requirement for entrance into the teacher education programs in the state, beginning in the fall of 1986. The Schools of Education at UNR and UNLV have taken major responsibility for this basic skills component of the teacher competency program. Representatives from each school have been appointed by the Deans to serve as liaisons. They will coordinate the program between the two campuses and communicate periodically with the Department of Education.

APPENDIX A

nte programs

PPST™

Descriptions of the Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST)

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Introduction

The Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST) of Reading, Mathematics, and Writing are three separate tests designed to measure basic proficiency in each of these areas. They may be taken individually or in any combination. PPST may be used for selection, admissions, evaluation, and certification in conjunction with other relevant information. A brief description of the tests' content is presented below, so that examinees preparing for the PPST may be guided in selecting materials to review.

- The Reading test measures skills in literal comprehension, the ability to clarify a written message and understand how the material is organized and conveys the message, and the ability to make reasoned, qualitative judgments about the nature and merits of a written message. The test consists of reading passages that vary from 100 to 200 words in length and cover topics from several sources. The Reading test has 40 multiple-choice items and a total testing time of 40 minutes.

- The Mathematics test measures competencies acquired in the course of studying mathematics at least through high school. The test covers such skills as comparing and ordering numbers, interpreting graphic material, using ratios and percents, reasoning quantitatively, using measurement concepts, and other fundamental mathematical skills. The Mathematics test has 40 multiple-choice items and a testing time of 50 minutes.

- The Writing test assesses the ability to use grammar and language appropriately and to communicate effectively in writing with a specific aim or purpose in mind. The Writing test has two separately timed 30-minute sections. The first section consists of 45 multiple-choice items on standard English usage and sentence correction; the second consists of one essay question. Only one total Writing score is reported.

READING

READING TEST SPECIFICATIONS

The Reading test measures the ability to understand, analyze and evaluate written messages. Varying in difficulty, the reading material is drawn from a variety of subject areas and real-life situations that educated adults needs and are exposed to. Each passage is followed by questions based on its content which relate to a variety of reading skills. All questions can be answered by information contained within the passage; no question requires outside knowledge.

The three major skill areas, together with interpretive subskills*, are Comprehension, Analysis, and Evaluation.

	Approx. % of items
A. Comprehension (17 to 20 items)	50%
The ability to understand accurately and completely the explicit content of a written message.	
1. Main idea of a passage or statement 2. Supporting ideas or detail 3. Relationships among ideas (e.g., sequence, cause and effect) 4. Summary of ideas in the passage or statement	
B. Analysis (13 to 14 items)	35%
The ability to clarify a written message and understand how it is organized and conveys its message (its language, logic or tone).	
1. The author's purpose 2. The author's assumptions 3. The author's attitude or tone toward the subject discussed 4. Inferences from or implications of, the passage 5. Fact vs. author's opinion in the message 6. Organization of the passage or statement (way in which the passage is organized) 7. Use of language in the passage 8. Application of elements in the passage (ways in which they can be applied to other situations)	
C. Evaluation (7 to 8 items)	15%
The ability to make reasoned qualitative judgments about the nature, content, and merits of a written passage or statement	
1. Emotional or manipulative aspects of the passage or statement 2. Strengths and weaknesses of the argument 3. Relevance or appropriateness of supporting evidence used by author to bolster his arguments 4. Relation of the message to the intended audience	

*These subskills are sampled for purposes of test construction.

Three types of items are included:

--long passages (200 words) with a set of 5-7 items
--short passages (100 words) with a set of 2-3 items
--discrete items with a brief stimulus

Items explore understanding of a range of units of discourse (words, phrases, clauses, sentences, idea clusters, paragraphs, etc.). The passage formats permit testing of a broader range of units of discourse than does the discrete item format.

Items in each of the three formats may pose questions of varying difficulty and test any of the skills.

The content of each form of the test is as follows:

Representativeness:

1. Two passages in each test deal with special concerns: one with minority-related issues and one with issues of concern to women.

Passages:

1. At least one long passage presents material that is explicit or easily understood; the other(s) presents a more complex discussion.

2. Passages exemplify a variety of modes of prose writing, e.g., discursive, descriptive, narrative. At least one passage is technical or scientific in nature.

Total number of items: 40.

MATHEMATICS

MATHEMATICS TEST SPECIFICATIONS

The Mathematics test measures the examinee's cumulative knowledge of mathematics from having studied it through elementary school, for at least one year in high school, and possibly for one year in college. It is assumed that certain commonalities exist in all mathematics curricula, and that all examinees will have had certain "basics" regardless of the city or state in which they went to school, or the textbook or methodology used in the schools. Therefore, these competencies are considered to be neither content specific nor content free. It covers arithmetic, algebra, geometry, measurement, and other problem-solving skills (e.g., graphs and flowcharts). The test requires the kind of mathematical competency one needs in everyday life; questions therefore require interpretation rather than computation, which is minimal. The test addresses six competencies: Has Good Number Sense; Understands and Uses Numbers Appropriately to Quantify Thinking; Recognizes and Uses Mathematical Relationships; Understands Measurement; Understands Deductive Reasoning; and Can Interpret Graphic, Symbolic and Verbal Material.

The six competencies, together with interpretive subskills*, are as follows:

	Approx. % of items
A. Has good number sense; that is, understands how numbers behave. (8 to 10 items)	25%
1. Has a sense of order among numbers--e.g., knows that 1/2 is between 1/3 and 2/3, that $-3 < -2$, that 1.9 is closer to 2 than 2 1/4 is, that 75% is less than 1, and that 600% is more than 1.	
2. Has a meaningful understanding of the way numbers are named (i.e., place value); understands that a number has many names and has facility in translating from one to another as needed; e.g., can use 50% or .5 or 1/2--whichever simplifies computation or aids flexibility of thinking.	
3. Has a sense of the order of magnitude of numbers as it relates to place value or scientific notation; e.g., recognizes that 100 is 1,000 times as great 0.1, or that 2.57×10^3 is 1/100 as great as 2.57×10^5.	
4. Estimates, or otherwise predicts, the outcome of computation.	

*These subskills are sampled for purposes of test construction.

Approx. % of items

B. Understands and uses numbers in an appropriate way to quantify thinking. (8 to 10 items) — 25%

1. Recognizes an appropriate match between mathematics and real life problems; e.g., selecting an appropriate operation for the solution of real-life problem.

2. Recognizes necessary and sufficient conditions for the solution of real-life problems; e.g., for a real-life problem, knows what numbers are needed and how to obtain them (what measurements are needed, e.g.).

3. Solves real-life problems by estimating answers and doing the necessary computation.

4. Recognizes and chooses multiple ways to find answers and equivalent computational procedures.

5. Recognizes an appropriate number that can be used as an answer to a problem and adjusts and interprets answers to fit the context of the problem; e.g., the answer, 5 1/3, would be recorded as 6 if it represents the number of cars needed to transport people, but recorded as 5 if it represents the number of passengers per car.

6. Correctly predicts the outcome of changing some number or condition in a problem in an "if-then" sense--e.g., if $N \div 5 = Q$, what is the value of $N \div 10$?

7. Interprets numbers when used to express probability.

C. Recognizes and uses mathematical relationships. (8 to 10 items) — 25%

1. Distinguishes among direct, inverse, and other kinds of variation without necessarily knowing the correct term for the relationship.

2. Recognizes spatial relationships in everyday life--e.g., identifies and predicts possible relationships among lines in space.

3. States and uses relationships for the measures of common two- and three-dimensional geometric figures.

Approx. % of items

4. Symbolizes a relationship appropriately; conversely, interprets a relationship expressed in symbols; understands the use of a formula as a way to solve a class of similar problems.

5. Recognizes equivalent relationships having a different forms--e.g., $d = rt$ -- $t = d \div r$.

6. Solves problems involving ratio and proportion and percent.

7. Recognizes relationships evident in data and makes appropriate predictions and/or extrapolations from that data.

D. Understands the mathematical basis of measurement. (4 to 6 items) — 10%

1. Understands that numbers are used to quantify attributes (e.g., length, temperature, area) of objects, not the objects themselves.

2. Recognizes and uses appropriate units for making everyday measurements.

3. Recognizes and uses geometric concepts in making linear, area, and volume measurements.

4. Understands the relationship between the size of the unit and the number of units--e.g., the shorter the unit used to measure length, the larger the number of those units in a specific measurement.

5. Knows in a general way how to convert from one unit to another in the same system--i.e., whether to multiply or divide.

6. Determines the measurements needed in order to solve a problem; can solve measurement problems.

7. Is literate about the metric (SI) system.

8. Reads a calibrated scale correctly, whether the calibration is in multiples of whole numbers or fractional division; estimates readings between tic marks.

E. Understands deductive reasoning. (4 to 6 items) — 10%

1. Correctly interprets sentences which incorporate the logical connectives "and," "or," and "if-then," as well as the quantifiers "some," "all," and "none."

Approx. % of items

2. Uses deductive reasoning to determine whether a conclusion based on a series of statements about everyday situations is valid or invalid.

3. Sees the need for basic definitions and assumptions and recognizes hidden assumptions--e.g., in advertisements or political slogans.

4. Makes appropriate generalizations; identifies counterexamples to inappropriate generalizations.

F. Interprets graphic, symbolic, and verbal material. (4 to 6 items) — 10%

1. Makes reasonable visual comparisons of the size of two or more objects.

2. Reads and interprets bar, line, and circle graphs and pictographs.

3. Chooses a mathematically appropriate graph to represent a given set of data.

4. Interprets a schematic diagram--e.g., a flow-chart, electrical wiring diagram, or diagram of the circulatory system of a frog.

Total number of items: 40.

WRITING

WRITING TEST SPECIFICATIONS

This test assumes that professionals are informed citizens of the world who have varied concerns and interests. It is based on the assumption that an effective writer should be able to:

1. provide and sustain a focus or thesis
2. attain in different papers the varied aims or purposes of discourse (e.g., explanatory, persuasive, expressive)
3. decide which of these aims or purposes is appropriate in a given writing situation
4. select and sustain an appropriate persona or voice
5. produce and develop adequate and appropriate material to accomplish the purpose for writing, identifying and supporting, as appropriate, important assumptions
6. choose and use a mode of organization consistently
7. preserve coherence in an extended piece of writing
8. choose an appropriate mode of organization (chronological, enumerative, etc.)
9. construct sentences in standard written English, adjusting choice of sentence structure and word choice to suit purposes and aims
10. use sentences and vocabulary which are appropriate to the purpose of the writing
11. use words and sentences which are appropriate for the intended readers
12. construct sentences in standard written English and identify sentences that do not observe the conventions of standard written English, such as grammar, usage, and punctuation

Writing (Multiple Choice)

The Multiple-Choice Writing section contains 45 questions which measure the ability to recognize and use standard written English correctly and effectively. A knowledge of formal grammatical terminology is not required, but questions relate to detecting errors or choosing the best way to rewrite certain phrases or sentences. Specifications for Multiple-Choice Writing include Usage and Sentence Correction.

- Usage (approximately 25 questions)

  This includes capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, verb form and tense, pronoun-antecedent agreement, parallel structure, diction, idiom, coordination, sub-ordination, correlation, comparison, adjective-adverb usage, and other conventions of standard written English. Some sentences contain no error.

- Sentence Correction (approximately 20 questions)

  This includes problems of coherence,word order, economy of statement, appropriateness of diction and choice of idiom, subordination of sentence elements, logical comparison structure, and clarity of modification and pronoun reference. Many sentence correction questions present faults in the logic or the structure of a sentence.

The following points are measured with both item types:

	Approx. % of items
A. Structure (Grammar and Logical Relationships)	70%
1. Noun, Pronoun, Verb, Adjective, and Adverb Problems - 8 to 11 items	
2. Coordination, Subordination, Correlation, Comparison, Parallelism, and Negation Structures - 15 to 21 items	
B. Diction, Idiom, and Mechanics (Redundancy, Word Choice, Punctuation, and Capitalization) - 8 to 14 items	30%

Writing (Essay)

The second part of the test consists of one separately timed 30-minute writing sample. The assigned topic could be very structured or open. Thirty minutes should allow sufficient time for examinees to read the topic carefully, organize their thoughts prior to writing, and write with reasonable care and precision. The topics that examinees are asked to write on will generally invite them to draw upon personal experience and observation for information, examples, and generalizations. Topics do <u>not</u> require a specialized knowledge.

The assigned topic may designate the audience for which the essay is to be written. This tests the ability to define a writing task and to handle the material appropriately for the intended audience. Suitable topics are a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, a letter to a potential employer, or an explanatory letter to a peer--each demanding a different approach.

All examinees who take the test at the same time must write on the same topic. The topics are designed to allow all examinees to display their writing at its best, and allow everyone to write something about the subject at hand.

Acknowledging that writing comprises a number of features that are not independent of one another, scorers will base their judgments on an assessment of such things as quality of insight or central idea; evidence that the writer knows why the piece is being written and for whom; consistency of point of view; cohesiveness; strength and logic of supporting information; rhetorical force; appropriateness of diction, syntax, and paragraphing; and correctness of mechanics and usage. Examinees sould be sure to write on the topic assigned, to address all the points presented in the topic assignment, and to support generalizations with specific examples.

Total number of items: 46 (45 multiple-choice and 1 essay)

APPENDIX B

Reading Test
QUESTION EVALUATION
Pre-Professional Skills Tests

Name _____

Question	Difficulty	Has the typical teacher education candidate had reasonable opportunity to learn the skills needed to answer the question?	How necessary are the skills tested by the question to performing teaching activities such as planning, instructing, evaluation and reporting?	Out of 100 marginal teacher education candidates, how many would know the answer to the question? (Do not count those who might answer correctly by guessing.)
1.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
2.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
3.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
4.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
5.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
6.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
7.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
8.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
9.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
10.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
11.	ا	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
12.	ه	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
13.	د	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
14.	ه	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
15.	ز	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
16.	ز	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
17.	ع	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
18.	ع	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
19.	ب	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
20.	ع	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 3: Reading Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
21.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
22.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
23.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
24.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
25.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
26.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
27.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
28.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
29.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
30.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 4: Reading Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
31.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
32.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
33.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
34.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
35.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
36.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
37.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
38.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
39.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
40.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Mathematics Test
QUESTION EVALUATION
Pre-Professional Skills Tests

Name _____

Question	Difficulty	Has the typical teacher education candidate had reasonable opportunity to learn the skills needed to answer the question?	How necessary are the skills tested by the question to performing teaching activities such as planning, instructing, evaluation and reporting?	Out of 100 marginal teacher education candidates, how many would know the answer to the question? (Do not count those who might answer correctly by guessing.)
1.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
2.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
3.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
4.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
5.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
6.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
7.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
8.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
9.	VD	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
10.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
11.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
12.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
13.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
14.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
15.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
16.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
17.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
18.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
19.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
20.		(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 3: Mathematics Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
21.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
22.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
23.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
24.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
25.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
26.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
27.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
28.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
29.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
30.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
31.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
32.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
33.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
34.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
35.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
36.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
37.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
38.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
39.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
40.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Writing Test
QUESTION EVALUATION
Pre-Professional Skills Tests

Name _____

Question	Difficulty	Has the typical teacher education candidate had reasonable opportunity to learn the skills needed to answer the question?	How necessary are the skills tested by the question to performing teaching activities such as planning, instructing, evaluation and reporting?	Out of 100 marginal teacher education candidates, how many would know the answer to the question? (Do not count those who might answer correctly by guessing.)
1.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
2.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
3.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
4.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
5.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
6.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
7.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
8.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
9.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
10.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 2: Writing Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
11.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
12.	H	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
13.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
14.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
15.	I	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
16.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
17.	I	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
18.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
19.	H	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
20.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 3: Writing Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
21.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
22.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
23.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
24.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
25.	D	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
26.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
27.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
28.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
29.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
30.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 4: Writing Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
31.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
32.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
33.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
34.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
35.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
36.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
37.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
38.	VD	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
39.	VD	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
40.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Page 5: Writing Test

Question	Difficulty	Reasonable opportunity to learn	Necessity of skills to teaching	Marginal candidates knowing the answer
41.	H	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
42.	E	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
43.	L	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
44.	VD	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____
45.	L	(_)Yes (_)No (_)Do not know	(_) Essential (_) Important (_) Helpful (_) Irrelevant	_____

Name _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Basic Skills Tests Validation
Nevada Department of Education
Preparation Exercise: Number I

The writing skills of a marginal teacher certification candidate should include at a minimum the ability to:

		Yes	No
1.	Provide and sustain a focus or thesis.	____	____
2.	Decide which of the varied aims or purposes of discourse (e.g., explanatory, persuasive, expressive) is appropriate in a given writing situation.	____	____
3.	Select and sustain an appropriate persona or voice.	____	____
4.	Produce and develop adequate and appropriate material to accomplish the purpose for writing, identifying and supporting, as appropriate, important assumptions.	____	____
5.	Choose and use a mode of organization consistently.	____	____
6.	Preserve coherence in an extended piece of writing.	____	____
7.	Choose an appropriate mode or organization (chronological, enumerative, etc.).	____	____
8.	Construct sentences in standard written English, adjusting choice of sentence structure and word choice to suit purpose and aims.	____	____
9.	Use sentences and vocabulary which are appropriate to the purpose of the writing.	____	____
10.	Use words and sentences which are appropriate for the intended readers.	____	____
11.	_____	____	____
	_____		
12.	_____	____	____
	_____		

Name _____

ESSAY EVALUATION

Basic Skills Tests Validation
Nevada Department of Education
Preparation Exercise: Number II

For each of the following sets of statements describing levels of writing skills, select the one statement that best depicts the quality of writing a teacher certification candidate must minimally demonstrate.

Set I:

1. There may be minor errors _____
2. There may be occasional non-serious errors _____
3. There are clear patterns of errors _____
4. There are serious errors in mechanics, usage or sentence structure _____
5. There are serious and persistent writing errors _____

Set II:

1. The writing is well organized and developed _____
2. The writing is adequately organized and developed _____
3. The writing is inadequately organized or developed _____
4. The writing is disorganized or developed very little _____
5. The writing is illogical, incoherent or severely underdeveloped _____

Set III:

1. There are sufficient and appropriate details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas _____
2. There are adequate details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas _____
3. There are some details to support a thesis or illustrate ideas _____
4. There is failure to support a thesis or illustrate generalizations with appropriate detail _____
5. There are few, if any, details or there are irrelevant specifics _____

Set IV:

1. A high degree of competence is demonstrated _____
2. Competence is clearly demonstrated _____
3. Competence is demonstrated _____
4. Some competence is demonstrated _____
5. Incompetence is suggested _____
6. Incompetence is demonstrated _____

Name _____

ESSAY EVALUATION WORKSHEET

Basic Skills Tests Validation
Nevada Department of Education
Part III

For a teacher certification candidate the quality of the essay is:

Essay	Below Minimal	Above Minimal	Quality Rank 1 through 12 1 the best	My Score 1 - 6 6 highest	National Panel Score 1 - 6 6 highest
P-127	___	___	___	___	___
P-128	___	___	___	___	___
P-129	___	___	___	___	___
P-130	___	___	___	___	___
P-131	___	___	___	___	___
P-132	___	___	___	___	___
P-134	___	___	___	___	___
P-137	___	___	___	___	___
P-138	___	___	___	___	___
P-141	___	___	___	___	___
P-142	___	___	___	___	___
P-146	___	___	___	___	___

From 1 to 12 the score recommended for the cut-score is:* [ ]

* the first reader's score from 1 to 6 plus the second reader's score from 1 to 6 equals the essay score. The essay score times 3.75 plus the number of multiple-choice questions answered correctly equals the raw composite writing score.